

Bird & Mammal Trip Report
Argentina – Atlantic Coast (Jan-Feb 2022)



Rob Jansen
photography

Introduction

About us

We are two enthusiastic nature lovers who travel the world together to search for stunning birds, fascinating mammals and incredible nature. Our world travel started in October 2021 in Chile, where we bought a car to drive through South-America in search of birds and mammals for about 2 years.

Rob Jansen is biologist and wildlife photographer, and thus has a lot of knowledge about species and ecology. He is enthusiastic about all that's in nature, but mainly photographs birds and mammals.

Romy Jansen-Houtzager is a marketing professional. The marketing behind our social media accounts, the look and feel of this report and the website are her work. In the field, she is an excellent spotter and very patient (give me some of her patience ...and hurry!).



Rob with an **Elephant Seal** at Punta Ninfa

Romy with **Magellanic Penguins** at Cabo Faro

Information and how to use this trip report

This trip report covers the region hugging the Atlantic Coast of Argentina, from Rio Gallegos in the South towards Buenos Aires in the North. For all photos of our Argentina trip, comments, compliments, any specific questions, visit and/or contact us via our website.

 www.robjansenphotography.com/argentina

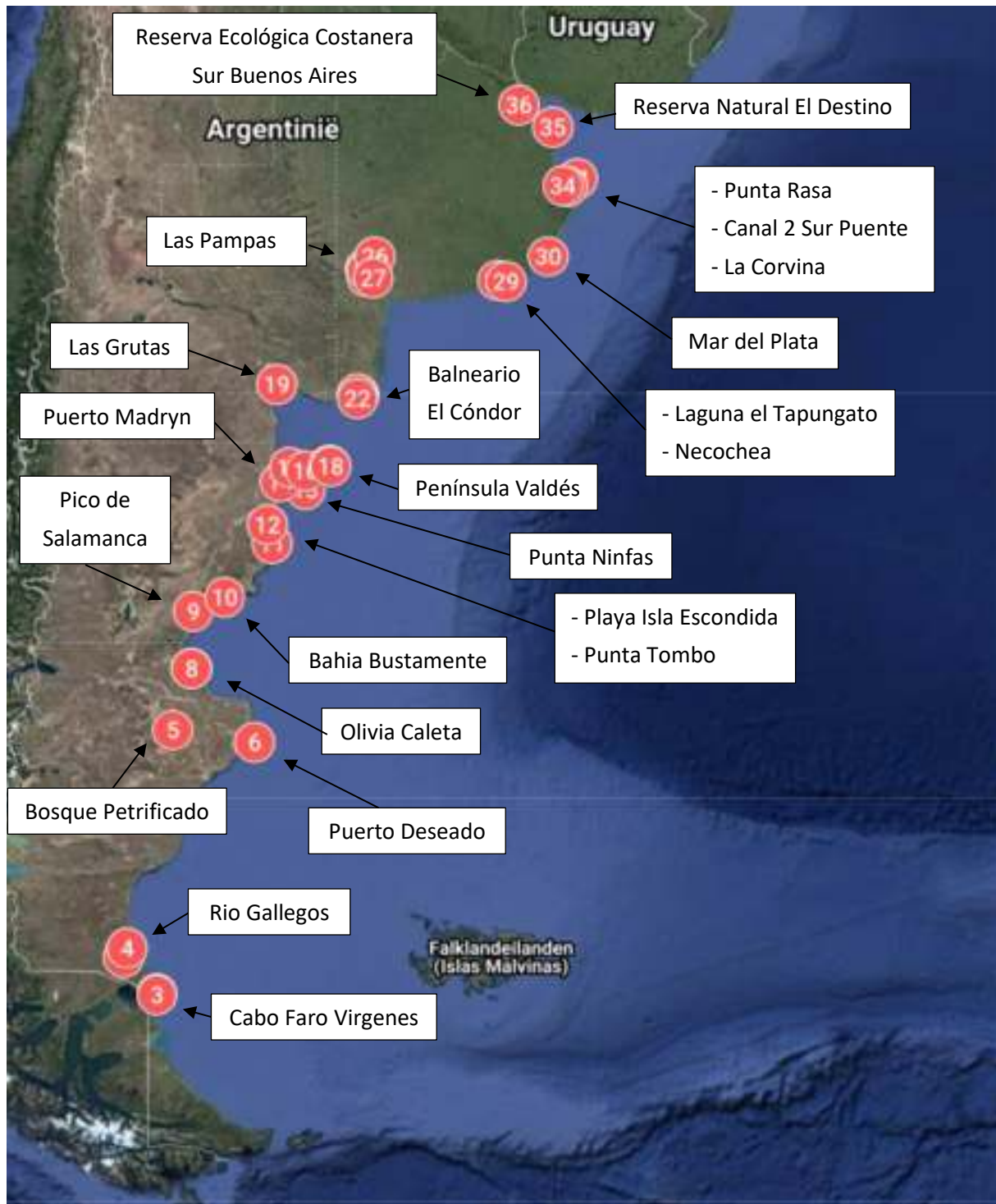
 www.instagram.com/robjansenphotography

Species are highlighted in this trip report: **blue for birds**, **red for mammals** and **green for herpetofauna**. Target species which we missed on a specific spot are written in *italic*. This gives you an idea which species to pay extra attention to. All observations made by us in this part of Argentina can be found on Observation.org. We observed a total of about 210 bird species and 17 mammal species in the Atlantic Coastal region of Argentina. Click here for the: [total bird list](#), [total mammal list](#) or [the total species list](#).

For more trip reports see our website: www.robjansenphotography.com/trip-reports

Map and specific locations

After the Chilean part of Patagonia (see previous trip report) we were able to cross the border to Argentina at the Austral Crossing near Rio Gallegos in the southeast of Argentina. From there we had a detour through the western part of Argentina, which we covered in the previous Patagonia trip report as well. This trip report describes the places along the Atlantic Coast from Rio Gallegos in the southeast, towards Buenos Aires in the north, visiting many places along the main highways along the coast.



We made a [map in Google My Maps](#) with pointers of interesting trails and places and specific bird and mammal locations. You can view this map, download the points and add them to your own map (click on the three dots above the legend and download the KML file and drag this to your own map), or add them in the app 'Maps.me'. Maps.me has almost all walking trails on it and you can use it offline. Route navigation by car doesn't always work great though and it's better to use google maps for that purpose.

Weather and timing

We visited the east coast of Argentina as part of our world travel from the 5th of January till the 12th of February 2022. The weather was mostly very windy, but with warmer temperatures than in the south of Chile. The further north we went the warmer it got. This made it more and more necessary to wake up at sunrise to have some good birding hours. From Península Valdés and especially after Bahía Blanca we could finally walk in our t-shirts again and put our zip-off pants to good use. Distances in between specific locations are large, but the number of targets are low. Because of this we had a harder time to get enough rest without feeling the urge to continue driving to the next place. This was specifically the case because we had most of our southern birding targets already in Patagonia. It was very dry due to a lack of recent rain and quite hot from the Península towards the north. For this part we would have loved to be there earlier (Oct-Dec) to have better temperatures and higher chances of observing certain species (Orcas, Southern Right Whale etc).

Transportation

Our transportation in this trip report was of course our Toyota 4Runner SR5 4.0 2010 (2x4) called 'Forrest'. We bought this car in Santiago and got it converted so that we could sleep in it as well. A car with high clearance isn't needed per se in Argentina, and most places can easily be visited with a normal sedan. There are lots of gravel roads which we took with great ease, which take (way) longer with a normal sedan, but are doable. Rain could make lots of roads unpassable though, as ground turned into mud and a slippery clayish layer formed. This even caused trouble for our 2x4 car and even other 4x4's at places like Punta Ninfas.



Our loyal friend Forrest at RN El Destino



Forrest on the cliffs at Punta Ninfas

Literature

- Birds of Argentina and the South-west Atlantic, Helm Field Guides, 1st edition, 2020, Mark Pearman & Juan I. Areta. *Drawings are ok, but for some species the details and proportions seem a bit off. But then, it's practically the only book for birders in Argentina. Searching up a bird (family) isn't made easy as the list in the beginning of the book is not alphabetically ordered. They do, however, pay extra attention to taxonomy and possible splits.*
- Mammals of the Southern Cone, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, 2020, 1st edition, Lynx. *Happy that Lynx decided to make mammals guides. This book is small and easy to take along and has all the mammals in there! For naturalists who are interested in the bigger fauna (not being bats, mice etc) this guide should suffice.*
- Merlin app for the birds sound. *Just amazing that the app is free. We didn't miss any sounds.*
- BirdNet app for recording the bird sounds. If you don't know all the bird sounds, BirdNet can help you record the sound and give a possible ID. It helped us a few times when we were frustratingly searching for a bird we heard deep inside the shrubs and couldn't find. A sure ID of a more common bird from BirdNet saved us some time here and there ;)
- iOverlander app for camping places. This app gives nice information on where to camp or buy stuff.

Equipment

Photography: Sony A9 II + 200-600mm + 1.4x converter + Sony 24-105mm (Rob), GoPro Hero 9 (Romy)

Binoculars and telescope: Swarovski EL 8x32 WB, Eden 8x32 XP, Swarovski 65HD + 25-50mm

Heat scope/Thermal imager: Lahoux Spotter Elite 35V (lahouxbirding.com). A great heat scope from a company in The Netherlands. I owned other brands, but we are super happy with the sharpness, modes and light weight of this heat scope! More here: www.robjansenphotography.com/lahouxbirding

Spotlighting: Fenix HT18 Long Distance Flashlight (powerful, very focussed and my preferred choice for open areas), Fenix TK35 2018-edition (less powerful and focussed than the HT18, but still very strong and nice for spotlighting!), Fenix FD41 Focus Flashlight (comparable to the LedLenser), LedLenser P7R (can be focussed😊)

Use of cell phones in Argentina

There are two bigger telecom providers in Argentina, Claro and Movistar. Both require foreigners to register their SIM-card online with their help via social media. We bought a Movistar chip at a kiosk. This couldn't be bought at Movistar stores surprisingly. Activating it was rather cumbersome. Information is all in Spanish when activating it on the phone, then they refer you to a number or Facebook. On FB they refer you again to Whatsapp. On Whatsapp we got only automatic messages from a bot. Only by putting comments on random posts on FB I got in contact and was able to register in the end (took me 2 weeks). Romy tried this but never got help, so she went to a store and they were able to help her there. So if you are going for Movistar: buy a chip at a kiosk and go to a Movistar store to get it activated. Cumsome, but it will be the quickest fix for short holidays.

Cash Argentina

Bring dollars/euros when visiting Argentina and be sure to look up the 'Blue Dollar' rates. As inflation is high in Argentina, currencies like dollars and euros are wanted to make sure savings don't go up in smoke. However, it's hard for Argentines to get these currencies. The 'Blue Dollar' rates are way higher than the official exchange rates (double the amount as we write this). Western Union will give you the Blue Dollar rate when you transfer money to yourself and pick it up at the counter (we pay an extra €3,90 fee for this). Your money will bring you twice as far or you can spend twice as much (depending on your style). Check online if the 'Blue Dollar' still exists, as politics made it 'disappear' for a few years (it's back since 2019). Argentinean pesos are worth nothing if you want to change them back to your local currency (and not many places do this anyways) so be smart on how many Argentinean pesos you get and spend it all in Argentina ;).

Water-to-Go

To reduce plastic usage on our travels we bought Water-to-Go water bottles. Read about our experience with Water-to-Go on our website: www.robjansenphotography.com/water-to-go. The bottle and filters are not too expensive, and you will have your investment back within one holiday. If you order with the voucher **RJANSEN15** you will get **15% discount** as well! Check the website here: www.watertogousa.com (United States of America, Canada), www.watertogo.eu (United Kingdom) or www.watertogo.shop (most countries in the EU)

Visited sites

Faro Cabo Virgenes

[-52.36514, -68.40483](#)

Visited dates: 5-6 January 2022

As we had some troubles crossing the borders with all the Covid regulations we were happy to finally be in Argentina and do something fun. We decided to take Ruta 40 Nacional about 15 minutes south of Rio Gallegos (start at [-51.74722, -69.33192](#)). The road is not too good and it took us 1 hour 45 minutes for the total 120km. A fellow traveller with a van took more than 3,5 hours for the same road. We had two young **South-American Grey Foxes** crossing on the way. As there are many more Magellanic Penguin colonies along the Atlantic coast it's doubtful if the total drive is worth the time and energy though.

There is a huge **Magellanic Penguin colony** at Faro Cabo. They say there are about 300.000 penguins. They nest underneath plants and are spread out along a big part of the coast. Really impressive to see and lots of fun to watch their behaviour, especially on the penguin highways from/towards the beach. There is no fee, and there is a trail which you can walk between the colony to meet them up close.

On the beach below the lighthouse (the Faro Cabo) there were at least 4 armadillo carcasses. We saw multiple dead ones on the road as well. Only in the morning we saw an alive **Large Hairy Armadillo** crossing the road.

We tried to do some land based sea watching from a private area at the end of RP1 ([-52.39393, -68.42732](#)). We asked the security guard if we could bird there, and that was no problem at all. However, none of the shearwaters came within ID-able reach of our telescope. Romy did find a **King Penguin** on the beach of Chile, found from the Argentinean side. It would have been easy to cross the border by going around the fence and get better views, but we were glad we were in Argentina and didn't want to risk it ;)



Magellanic Penguin

Magellanic Penguin 'highway'

Rio Gallegos

[-51.60197, -69.24884](#)

Rio Gallegos is the first big city you come across coming from Chile. If you pass here in winter time, it might be a good idea to check eBird for recent sightings of *Hooded Grebe*. They gather in estuaries on the Atlantic coast of Argentina, amongst others at Rio Gallegos & Punta Loyola (on the river 'Rio Gallegos').

Bosque Petrificados

[-47.66502, -67.99413](#)

Visited dates: 18-19 January 2022

Bosque Petrificados de Jaramillo National Park is not a birding or mammal watching location in itself per se. The small park is reached by driving about 50km west on Ruta Provincial 49. The park is open from 10.00 – 17.00 (Apr-Sep) / 09.00-19.00 (Oct-Mar) and the entrance is free. The park has a small museum and there is a 2km trail. It's quite spectacular to see the petrified trees lying on the ground. Definitely worth a visit! **Patagonian Maras** can be seen along Ruta 49, especially from Ruta 3 to the border of the park itself (about 20km before the museum and the walk). Some people had many along the road, but we didn't see anything on our way there in the beginning of the evening. The next morning we drove towards Ruta 3 again and spotted 3 Maras on the salty remnants of what was once a lagoon. Later on we had another 4 on a similar spot, quite far from the road.



Bosque Petrificado

Romy at Bosque Petrificado

Pto. Deseado – Isla Pingüino

[-47.91159, -65.71828](#)

Visited dates: 17-18 January 2022

Puerto Deseado is reached by following the Ruta Nacional 281 towards the coast. The main attraction here is Faro Isla Pingüino. We booked our trip with Los Vikingos and negotiated it down to 6500 pesos total without a (packed) lunch. The tour left around 08.15 and we arrived at the island about an hour

later. **Magellanic Penguins** are common on the island. The south-eastern point has a colony of **Southern Rockhopper Penguins**, which is the main target of the tour. It's awesome to walk between these birds and see where they get their name from. We spend about 1-1,5 hours between them. **Macaroni Penguins** sometimes show up on this island from March on. We had a few **Snowy Sheathbills** between the Penguins.



Southern Rockhopper Penguin



Southern Rockhopper Penguin

On the route back towards the boat we took some more time for the **Brown Skuas** as well. The beach near the small dock holds a colony of **South-American Sea Lions**, between which there were 4 **Elephant Seals**. On route back they sailed along a few islands with many more Sea Lions, some more **Snowy Sheathbills** and **Dolphin Gulls**. They also paid more attention to dolphins on the way back. We had 2 **Commerson's Dolphins** playing alongside the boat. Later on we also had 2 **Paele's Dolphins** next to the boat. Unfortunately they only spend less than 5 minutes with both Dolphin species. They said they had another group, but after we had lunch 1,5h later they were still at the dock... That would be the only negative on a further awesome trip!



Commerson's Dolphin

Paele's Dolphin

Celeta Olivia

[-46.49364, -67.47587](#)

Visited date: 19 January 2022

Just south of Celeta Olivia is (another) **South American Sea Lion** colony. It's right along Ruta 3, and you can park your car south of the colony and walk a bit towards them. Really cool to see them a bit up close! A beautiful **Dolphin Gull** was also present at this colony. The colony tends to move from time to time, so if you don't find them at the given coordinates they are probably up to 1km south of these coordinates.

South from where you park your car are the remnants of the old highway ([-46.49774, -67.47331](#)). Walking this in the evening yielded 4 **Southern Mountain Cavies** for us.

We saw a big fluke several times on the ocean, but we couldn't see any fins or tails and had to be satisfied with leaving it '**whale spec**'.



South American Sea Lion

Southern Mountain Cavy

Pico de Salamanca

[-45.40888, -67.41611](#)

Visited date: 21 January 2022

We read a research paper that caught a **Patagonian Possum** at Pico de Salamanca, and we decided to give this place a try. However, the gate was locked. We climbed it and walked to the house, to find nobody there. We only found a **Large Hairy Armadillo** and some dead sheep and cats (probably Geoffroy's) stuck to the fence. We tried spotlighting in the evening and found something in the bushes along the road towards the house which looked like a small Possum in size and in the way it moved, but we couldn't find it with the flashlight. No luck for this species. As it's not a public place it's probably better left alone by others, unless you think your chances are better;)



Creepy dead cat

Large Hairy Armadillo

Bahia Bustamente

[-45.10925, -66.53041](#)

Visited date: 22 January 2022

We drove to Bahia Bustamente via Ruta Provincial 28 and a small part of Ruta Provincial 1. We parked the car along the road and walked to the sea. We found our target, **Chubut Steamerduck**, really soon (on a sandy beach though). We found another one on a few rocks a bit further up (as it's supposed to be according to the bird book). Along the beach were 100's of **Two-banded Plovers** and 3 species of Oystercatcher: **Magellanic Oystercatcher**, **American Oystercatcher** and **Blackish Oystercatcher**.

**Chubut Steamerduck**

Punta Tombo

[-44.04543, -65.22347](#)

This is the place where most people search for the **Chubut Steamerduck**. **Rusty-backed Monjita** is seen here as well. Punta Tombo also holds a huge colony of **Magellanic Penguins** and **Southern Mountain Cavy** can be found here as well. The entrance fee is about 1300 pesos/12,5USD (Jan 2022). As we had

already seen lots of Magellanic Penguins we decided to safe ourselves the trip and the costs. However, we wanted to include it for your information.

Playa Isla Escondida

[-43.68041, -65.33939](#)

Another one of those places we skipped because we had seen Elephant Seal already, and we had more places to see this species. But there is a (small) **Southern Elephant Seal** colony here, which might be better accessible than the one at Punta Ninfas and will be closer by than the one at Peninsula Valdés.

Punta Ninfas

[-42.97824, -64.30951](#)

Visited dates: 22-23 January 2022

This is a great place to see **Southern Elephant Seals**! However, make sure it didn't rain the days before and check the weather forecast before you go! The road is quite long, but easily doable with a 2x4. However, we just had rain and some parts were just terrible. Our car slipped to the sides of the road in mud pools and we almost got stuck a few times. We had to help some people who were stuck for 5 hours before we got them loose! We saw a **Large Hairy Armadillo** on our way here.

Once you get to the top of the cliffs it's about a 10-15 minutes down to the beach where the Elephant Seals lie. We didn't even see them first from the top as they were on top of sea weed which almost had the same colour. We had two groups about 200m from each other, more or less underneath the lighthouse. Both groups had about 30 individuals.

Punta Ninfas is the place where BBC filmed a part of their documentary on the **Orcas** hunting Seals by beaching themselves. This only happens at high tide, and the best months are October – December and March-April. We watched two high tides but didn't see them.



Southern Elephant Seal



Southern Elephant Seal

Puerto Madryn

[-42.79701, -65.01407](#)

Visited date: 23 January 2022

We didn't like this city too much, and the only reason we birded here were recent sightings of **Carbonated Sierra Finch** south of town. We birded the road for about 1h and found 1 female and 1 male. We also had a **Patagonian Canastero**. The place felt a bit sketchy, which is why we left after we had our two targets. Only later we wished we would have searched a bit longer to also find **Rusty-backed Monjita** and **Lesser Shrike-tyrant**, which are both seen here as well.



Patagonian Canastero



Carbonated Sierra Finch

Peninsula Valdés

[-42.51372, -64.74928](#)

Visited dates: 23-24 January 2022

This was one of those places we really looked forward to before and during our travel. Looking back on it, we wouldn't have visited it though. The price is a one-time entrance fee of 1600 pesos p.p. (about 15,5 USD), paid at the counter along the entrance road. It's valid if you stay on the Peninsula or when you leave and get it stamped (only done with proof of a reservation in Puerto Piramides). Only about 20km after the ticket counter there is the information centre where you can ask about recent sightings of Orcas, and where we were informed many roads were closed off. Most likely because of the bad condition the gravel roads were in after the rain. The super touristy town of Puerto Piramides is the only place where you are allowed to spend the night. This means that you will have to do quite some driving to get to places, and the rest of the reserve is only open from 08.00 – 20.00.

There is a huge **South American Sea Lion** colony a bit south of Puerto Piramides ([-42.58469, -64.3093](#)). There were lots of pups when we were there and that was awesome to see. But the viewing distance is huge and there are no benches or so to sit on and watch the colony.

Not long after we drove east from Puerto Piramides we had 2 **Patagonian Maras** on a dried up lakebed. We also had a **Darwin's Nothura** next to the road (besides many **Elegant Crested-Tinamous**). On the far east of the Peninsula (a 80km drive) there is a **Magellanic Penguin** colony ([-42.4613, -63.6118](#)). A bit south there is a **South American Sea Lion** colony mixed with some **Southern Elephant Seals** (

[42.49469, -63.60886](#)). Also here the viewing distance is so big that even with a scope the animals looked small. Nothing compared to the other places we had the fortune to see these creatures. *Orcas* come here as well with high tide. Because of the opening hours of the reserve you can only visit one high tide. We didn't see any Orcas, and it had been already 8 days ago that Orcas had been spotted there. September – November and March-April seem the better months for this species.

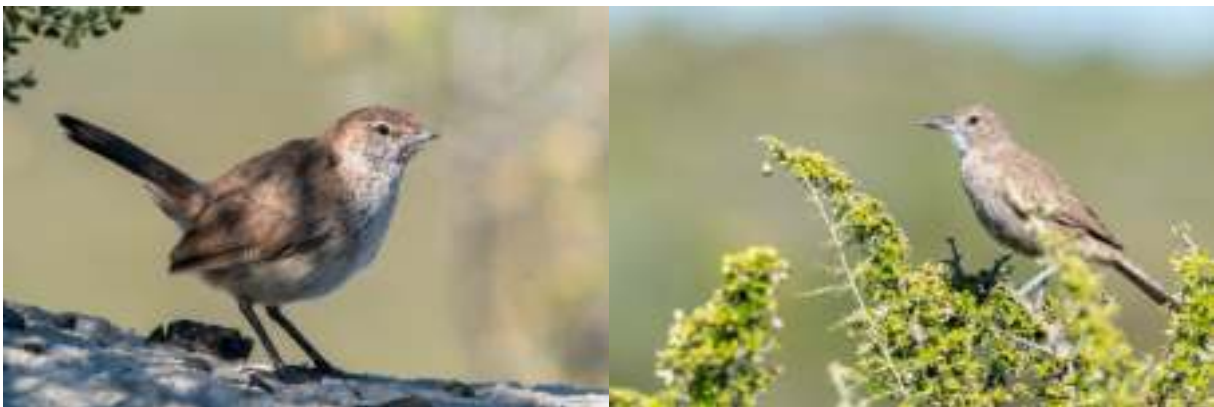
Another advantage of visiting in September – November is that *Southern Right Whales* can be seen. These can be seen from the coast at certain spots, but also by doing a boat tour from Puerto Piramides. *Dusky Dolphins* can be seen during such a trip as well. All tour companies said that our chances for seeing cetaceans were close to 0, so we decided not to do a boat tour.

Las Grutas

[-40.7753, -65.07982](#)

Visited date: 25 January 2022

Las Grutas offers some interesting birding as it's an accessible place along the coast with 'Monte desert' habitat. The place itself is not too interesting, as it mainly involves walking near a dirt road used by many cars to go to the rubbish dump. However, walking around here we finally had some new bird species and we felt like birding again since a long time. Patagonia and the trip north had felt like targeting only one or two species at every location. Walking some roads close to the rubbish dump quickly yielded many **White-tipped Plantcutters**, some **Greater Wagtail-tyrant**, a **Straneck's Tyrannulet** and a **White-striped Spinetail**. Suddenly we heard a **Sandy Gallito** calling, after which two Gallitos showed themselves really well! Because I was busy photographing them I only shortly paid attention to the **White-banded Mockingbird** flying away from the bush above it, after which we didn't see any White-banded Mockingbirds again on the trip... Walking back to the car we found 2 **White-throated Cacholote**. Romy saw a **Cavy spec.** running away, and saw a **South American Grey Fox** crossing the road. We missed out on **Rusty-backed Monjita** unfortunately. **Steinbach's Canastero** had been seen here according to eBird, but even taping didn't lure any Canastero in... We did see 3 more Cacholotes though.



Sandy Gallito

White-throated Cacholote

Balneario El Cóndor

[-41.02158, -62.79752](#)

Visited dates: 25-27 January 2022

This place was great! The town is small and has a 'friendly' vibe. This should be a good place to search for the La Plata Dolphin -also called Franciscana- at high tide. We didn't find exactly where to look in trip reports, and locals pointed us to places far away from the town. We tried our luck the first day at high tide in afternoon from 15.00 – 19.00 (high tide at 18.00). Even though it was a Tuesday the beach was super crowded with people fishing and swimming. We didn't see anything, and the strong onshore wind and waves didn't help. Only a fly-by of an **Olrog's Gull** gave excitement and the **Gull-billed Terns** were fun to watch as well. The next morning high tide was around 06.15, so we sat down on the highest dune at 05.45. Only after 1,5 hours of searching Romy spotted 3 dolphins on the other side of the river. Happy as we were she found such an elusive species from so far away, our enthusiasm was quickly lowered when we saw them jumping out of the water, plashing their tail etc. These had to be **Common Bottlenose Dolphins**. In the afternoon we decided to just relax with a book -and our binos- in a chair on the beach. About 2 hours before high tide Romy suddenly screamed she found **La Plata Dolphins/Franciscanas**, and after a few nervous minutes I also saw them. We were able to get some decent proof pictures of the 3-4 individuals. The next morning we tried again at high tide. The conditions were amazing with almost no wind or waves, but we only saw one **Common Bottlenose Dolphin** again and another **Olrog's Gull**.

For the tides: www.es.wisuki.com/tide/4002/el-condor



La Plata Dolphin / Franciscana

Common Bottlenose Dolphins

After the first morning we went searching for Patagonian Maras between Balneario El Cóndor and Viedma. It didn't take long before we found a few, and after doing a quick walk behind the gate we found no less than 8 **Patagonian Maras** ([-40.96827, -62.84941](#)). This patch is behind a fence and a locked gate, but the gate was used by multiple locals. We spoke with one and he seemed more than ok for us to walk there. He said that Plains Viscachas were common as well, and in the evening we went back to this point. In the grassland south of the coordinates we found many (like 100s) **Plains Viscachas**, but all too far away for pictures. The mosquitos made it a quick stop anyways.



Patagonian Mara

Patagonian Mara

El C ndor is however best known for having the world largest parrot colony though. The cliffs south of town harbour 1000s nesting sites of the **Burrowing Parrot** ([-41.06279, -62.84928](#))! The best way to observe them is going to the beach before sunset and see the parrots gathering while they try to find their nest and fly back into it. After the breeding season not all parrots stay here, but still it was quite impressive. In the morning the electricity lines south of the village are just loaded with parrots, amazing!

Las Pampas

[-38.32123, -62.64368](#)

Visited dates: 28-29 January 2022

Even though it wasn't initially in our plans, we had some time to spare and decided to pay Chasico a visit. The region here has some of the last remaining Pampas habitat. We first birded a dirt road north of the RN35 ([-38.48663, -62.58602](#)), where another birder found **Pampas Meadowlarks** in 2016. Arriving there it seemed way harder to actually separate this species from the abundant Long-tailed Meadowlark. Many individuals had some features of either species, even though the book described it as ID-features. We found males without any contrast on the back and sides, but with a pointy red part on the bottom of the belly. We found intensely coloured males with white underwings. We found relatively short-billed and short-tailed individuals with whitish underwings etc. We tried multiple roads around Chasico, but couldn't find any bird that ticked off all the ID-features. As it was hot, we waited till sunset and spotlighted Ruta Provincial 76 going north ([-38.34599, -62.59973](#)). We saw 2 Foxes in the field, one of which quickly crossed the road. We were quite certain they were **South-American Grey Foxes**, even though **Pampas Fox** would be more logical. Not much later we had an armadillo on the side of the road, which looked smaller than the Large Hairy Armadillos we had seen further south. We initially thought it might be a Pichi, but with the help of Maurice Tijm we noted it down as **Large Hairy Armadillo** after all. A (probable) female **Scissor-tailed Nightjar** on the road made us stop, and made us notice another **Armadillo spec.** into the fields.

A bit later we had something large crossing the street, and soon we saw two other individuals crawling into their burrows: **Plains Viscachas**! After that we only found 31 **Burrowing Owls** on the roads, but nothing else.



Large Hairy Armadillo



Probably female **Scissor-tailed Nightjar**

The next morning we tried a spot (thanks eBird) for **Pampas Pipit**, and luckily we had one singing bird high up in the air ([-38.0474, -62.34222](#)). Most pipits were not vocal these days, so ID-ing them was hard -or even impossible-, even with the book next to the pictures.

After this we went to another place where **Pampas Meadowlark** had recently been seen ([-38.50037, -62.38322](#)). On the way we saw 1000's of **Swainson's Hawks** in one of the fields, an amazing sight! The road towards the birding spot was bad, and not driveable without a high clearance 2x4. We saw a **Molina's Hog-nosed Skunk** on the side of the road and a total of 6 **Patagonian Maras** in the field while driving up to the birding spot. Again we had a hard time ID-ing the Meadowlarks that dared to brave the strong winds and sit on the fences. A **Spotted Nothura** and another 3 **Patagonian Maras** was all we saw.



Fork-tailed Flycatcher

Yeah...not much to see.. but it's a **Pampas Pipit**

Laguna el Tapungato

[-38.5335, -58.92887](#)

Visited dates: 29-31 January 2022

This location is just south of the RN228 towards Necochea. It's mainly a place for fishermen, and it's closed on Mondays and Tuesday –but the owner 'Fernando' closes and opens when he feels like it-. The place itself is not a die-hard birding or mammal-watching place, but enjoyable. *Dot-winged Crane* and *South American Painted-snipe* have been seen here in the past, but according to the owner only when the water level is way higher in the small creek. We had *Warbling Doradito* in the reeds and saw our first *Greater Capybaras*. *Coypus* and the introduced *Common Muskrats* were also present. While selecting some pictures we saw a *Red-winged Tinamou* crossing the grass before our car. According to Fernando *White-eared Opossum* can be seen in the small forest across the lagoon, but due to the strong winds we didn't try.



Greater Capybara

Red-winged Tinamou

Necochea

[-38.58522, -58.69341](#)

Visited dates: 31 January 2022

This place is only worth a quick visit. You can park just before the pier. Walking on the pier you will notice a large colony of *South American Sea Lions* right next to the pier on a small sandy beach. Many people were standing really close to it, without it (seemingly) bothering them too much. People were even fishing right next to the colony... at the end of the pier there is a *South American Fur Seal* colony on the concrete blocks. It is only visible from afar with binoculars when standing a bit more northerly on the pier. However, standing on the end of the pier/road we observed a few individuals swimming in the water, their pointy noses clearly visible!



South American Fur Seal colony

South American Fur Seal

Mar del Plata

[-38.04186, -57.52668](#)

We wanted to do a pelagic from this place. However, we never got a response on our email from Seriemas Nature Tours, and Sandpiper Tours dared to ask 450 USD for 2 people. Normally they need 15 people, but because that was impossible to arrange, they opted for a fishermen's trip. It was even unsure if they could do any chumming, so this was too much for us. Too bad, because they regularly spot *Black-browed Albatross*, *Yellow-nosed Albatross*, and sometimes see *Southern Royal Albatross* and *Shy Albatross*. *White-chinned Petrel*, *Southern Giant Petrels*, *Greater Shearwater*, *Sooty Shearwater* and *Manx's Shearwater* are all quite regular. Another time maybe:)

Punta Rasa

[-36.32528, -56.74795](#)

Visited dates: 31 January – 2 February 2022

How to get there: Navigate to the town of San Clemente and follow the dirt road north of town towards Parque Termas Marinas. After 1,7km you will see a turn-off at your right hand side, where you can park. You can also drive both streets till the end. There is a paid parking at Termas Marinas or you can drive on the beach at Punta Rasa, even with a normal sedan. With rain or high tide, don't drive the road towards the right. We did drive the road after lots of rain fell in the days before, and lost our front license plate in one of the deep puddles. Tens of cars were searching for theirs as well, which made us feel less stupid. Awesome note: more than a week later somebody found our license plate back!

There are many North American waders that can be found on the sandbanks and at Punta Rasa, as well as gulls and terns. *Olrog's Gull* can be found, but we didn't try hard for this species here. We had many *Black Skimmers* and *Royal Terns*, about a dozen *Snowy-crowned Terns* and 2 *Yellow-billed Terns*.

**Black-and-rufous Warbling-finch****Sulphur-bearded Reedhaunter**

Walking along the sedges and patches of reed we encountered **Freckle-breasted Thornbird** (quite many calling), **Bay-capped Wren-spinetail**, **Grass Wren (Pampas)** and a **Sulphur-breasted Reedhaunter**. Unfortunately we couldn't find our bigger targets, being **Dot-winged Crake**, **Hudson's Canastero** and **Curve-billed Reedhaunter**. **Pampas Deer** is supposed to occur here, and we saw droppings that might belong to a deer, but we didn't see any individuals.

**Freckle-breasted Thornbird****Great Pampa Finch**

Canal 2 Sur Puente

[-36.49377, -57.01221](#)

Visited dates: 2-3 February 2022

How to get there: Canal 2 is south of Ruta 11 and east of the Canal crossing it. Ruta 11 is now a 2x2 lane highway separated by a huge median strip. Coming from the west you can turn-off here ([-36.48841, -57.00285](#)). Coming from the northeast you have to drive a bit further west and then take the well-signposted 'Retorno' to get to the other side.

We parked the car ([-36.49377, -57.01221](#)), put on our boots and sprayed on a lot of DEET (freaking mosquitos...). There was only one target here, the **South American Painted-snipe**. We walked towards the fence with the gate and went left (north) along the fence. We searched the edges of the reed in search of this species, and after already 100m we couldn't continue any further due to the marsh.

However, hidden underneath the sedges was one Painted-snipe! We came back in the evening, crawled underneath the fence and searched more of the marsh, but only found one other individual. The next morning we found it on the same spot, and after walking into the marsh (with boots) I found a couple more snipes. One of them was quite obliging! In total we had 4-5 individuals here, but there are reports on eBird with 65 individuals! Lots of **Coypus** here, as well as common birds species we hadn't seen further south yet.



South American Painted-snipe

South American Painted-snipe

La Corvina

[-36.47029, -57.13136](#)

Visited dates: 2 February 2022

How to get there: La Corvina is a gravel road north of the Ruta 11. Ruta 11 is a 2x2 lane highway, separated by a huge median strip. No matter which direction you come from, there is a turn-off directly at this point!

Park the car at the beginning of the road and walk the first 1km. The main target here is **Hudson's Canastero**, which we found after about 900 meter/1h search. Along the search we observed **White-browed Meadowlark/Blackbird**, **Double-collared Seedeater**, **Bay-capped Wren-spinetail** and **Sulphur-bearded Reedhaunter**. On the way back we heard another **Hudson's Canastero** singing from the wood stand and had an obliging **Freckle-breasted Thornbird**. **Bearded Tachuri** has been observed here as well.



Hudson's Canastero



White-browed Meadowlark

Reserva Natural El Destino

[-35.13675, -57.39234](#)

Visited dates: 3-4 February 2022

The reserve is open from 08.00 – 20.00 and isn't big (www.reservaeldestino.org). The entrance fee is 300 pesos p.p. and 650ARS for camping (+500ARS for some reason for motorhomes). This was practically the only forest we birded during our travel along the Atlantic coast of Argentina! The huge white morpho butterflies are a delight to see (Argentine flag butterfly - *Morpho epistrophus argentinus*). Our main target however was found next to the path towards the river. Along both sides of the path there is a marsh, dense habitat, where **Red-and-White Crake** was seen recently. We tried taping it and immediately got a response from two birds! Ignoring the many mosquitos we finally managed to get some decent views of one of the birds between the vegetation!! As we were surprised by the sheer luck on the first try, we decided to try it again after 50-100m more. Again we got a response, and closer to the river we got another response of 2 more birds on the other side of the path. Even though this patch was more open, we didn't manage to get a view of these birds. It seems that this place is quite good for this species (although this might have been an influx after the recent rains, not sure..).

Golden-breasted Woodpecker (by some authorities split from **Green-barred Woodpecker**) was heard regularly. **Curve-billed Reedhaunter** is seen here as well. We didn't have much bird activity the rest of the afternoon though.

In the evening we heard and saw many **Tropical Screech-owls**, but failed to add the resident **Barn Owl** to our trip list (in the old stables). Walking back towards our car we crossed paths with a **Pampas Fox**.

Reserva Ecológica BA

[-34.61609, -58.3551](#)

Visited date: 12 February 2022

General information: Open from Tuesday – Sunday (closed on Mondays) from 08.00 – 18.00 (April-October) and from 08.00-19.00 (November-March). Entrance is free.

The Reserva Ecológica Costanera Sur in Buenos Aires is a nice park where you can observe some common species of birds close to the city centre. It is a nice option if you have to spend some days in Buenos Aires, but it probably won't give you any species you can't see anywhere else. Coming from the south we encountered multiple species we hadn't seen on our trip yet (but which are more common in the north), like **Black-backed Water-tyrant**, **Narrow-billed Woodcreeper** and **Gilded Hummingbird**. The park gets quite busy, so plan to be there at opening time.

You made it! Thank you for reading 😊

For all photos of our Argentina trip, comments, compliments, any specific questions, visit and/or contact us via our website:

 www.robjansenphotography.com/argentina  www.instagram.com/robjansenphotography

All observations made by us in Argentina can be found on Observation.org. We observed a total of about 210 bird species and 17 mammal species in the Atlantic Coastal region of Argentina. Click here for the: [total bird list](#), [total mammal list](#) or [the total species list](#).

Top 5	Birds	Mammals
1	Southern Rockhopper Penguin	Southern Elephant Seal
2	South American Painted-snipe	La Plata Dolphin/Francisana
3	Sandy Gallito	Patagonian Mara
4	Red-and-white Crake	Commerson's Dolphin
5	White-throated Cacholote	Molina's Hog-nosed Skunk

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Hooded Siskin



Sooty Tyrannulet



Burrowing Parrot



Grass Wren (Pampas)



Snail Kite



Southern Elephant Seal



Austral Dasher (*Micrathyria hypodidyma*)



Dolphin Gull